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# PRESS RELEASE

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## **SENATOR BOXER, LOCAL LEADERS DISCUSS SOLUTIONS TO GROWING AIR CRISIS**

**WESTWOOD, CA** – U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer met with a delegation of local elected leaders today to discuss the seriousness of Southern California's growing air quality crisis. The group renewed calls for federal and state policymakers to take emergency actions to reduce emissions associated with goods movement activities. The meeting with Sen. Boxer follows resolutions by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) and South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD) to urge that emergency actions be taken to reduce port-related air pollution in the region.

"It is long past time to tighten controls on pollution from ships in our harbors," said Senator Boxer. For too long, people who live near our busiest shipping facilities have paid a price with their families' health. This hearing will help focus attention on the critical need to reduce air pollution in our ports."

"Finding solutions to this growing crisis will only be possible through a true collaboration between federal, state and local government leaders, as well as the goods movement industry," said San Bernardino County Supervisor, SCAG President and AQMD Board Member Gary Ovitt. "The time to act is now, and we are very pleased that Senator Boxer has recognized the severity of the problems as well as the need for immediate action."

In addition to Supervisor Ovitt, Long Beach City Councilwoman Tonia Reyes Uranga – who also serves on both the SCAG and AQMD Boards – and a number of other local elected officials were in attendance to urge stronger federal action to address the air crisis.

Southern California faces serious challenges in meeting federal standards for ozone and fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>), one of the primary pollutants associated with diesel emissions. As the nation's main gateway for the movement of goods, Southern California derives significant economic benefits from hosting the nation's two largest ports and an ever-growing logistics industry. However, the region is also subjected to serious public health consequences due to the air pollution produced from these activities.

(more)

A recent California Air Resources Board (ARB) study found that the South Coast Air Basin suffers approximately 5,400 premature deaths, 2,400 hospitalizations, 140,000 cases of asthma and 980,000 lost work hours each year as a result of exposure to diesel-related pollution. One of the primary emission sources of PM 2.5 in the region are goods movement activities from heavy-duty diesel trucks, locomotives and ocean-going vessels. Identifying solutions to this challenge is further complicated by the fact that more than 80 percent of the emissions associated with these pollutants are under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and ARB.

In an effort to reduce one of the largest sources of emissions in the harbor area, U.S. Senators Boxer and Dianne Feinstein have introduced the Marine Vessel Emissions Reduction Act of 2007 (S. 1499), a bill that would require the EPA to sharply reduce the sulfur content of ship fuel and set stringent new standards for ship engines. A companion bill, H.R. 2548, has been introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives by Reps. Hilda Solis (D-El Monte), Jane Harman (D-El Segundo) and Lois Capps (D-Santa Barbara). Sen. Boxer, who chairs the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, will be holding a special field hearing on the legislation on Thursday, August 9, at the Port of Los Angeles.

Due to new medical research, SCAG and AQMD are working closely together to bring further attention and action to the growing awareness of adverse health effects at current air quality levels. Both agencies adopted strong resolutions earlier this summer calling upon the federal and state governments to take immediate action to address the air quality problem. The two agencies also traveled to Washington, D.C. in June to meet with U.S. Transportation Secretary Mary Peters and congressional leaders regarding the impact of mobile sources on Southern California's air quality.